

THE CANADIAN ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS IN ENGLAND.

The Worst Yet.

NO greater shock has been administered to the public mind than is contained in the terribly damning report of Dr. Bruce, recently appointed Inspector-General of the Canadian Medical Service. It would be impossible to conceive of a more scathing indictment of a Government Department than is contained in that report, from which we quote the following paragraph:—

Medical Board a Disgrace.

"The present Medical Board situation is a disgrace to the Canadian Medical Service, and is responsible largely for excessive wastage of the Canadian Expeditionary Force and for the unsatisfactory estimation of pensions."

"The Medical Board Department practically runs itself; there is no central control, no uniformity of standard among the different boards, no supply of an adequately permanent and efficient personnel for medical boards, no records of a satisfactory nature available regarding very many casualties, no instructions regarding pensions."

Canadian Medical Service Failed to an Almost Criminal Degree.

"The Canadian Medical Service have failed to an almost criminal degree. There have been no precautions to secure ready identification of the soldier. No thumb prints, photographs or record of marks. Records are hopelessly bad. The organization of the Discharge Boards has been bad."

Personnel Bad.

"The personnel of the Canadian Army Medical Corps has been greatly hampered by the granting of commissions to medical men whose ability in civil life, and in some cases whose well-known habits were such as to reasonably preclude them from being honored with a commission in the Canadian Army Medical Corps."

Officers are Drug Fiends, addicted to Alcoholism, &c., &c.

"It has been found on investigation that many of the officers who have been given commissions have been failures as medical men at home, or are over age or are drug fiends, or addicted to alcoholism, and these officers are not only of little or no use as Canadian Army Medical Corps officers, but their presence on an overseas unit is a detriment to the efficiency of that corps."

Work of Voluntary Aid Hospitals condemned.

"It cannot be questioned that now—at

the end of the two years of war—the use of Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospitals by the Canadian Medical Service is most strongly to be condemned."

"In the Shorncliffe area there are 57 such institutions with a total capacity of over 3,000 beds. They are scattered over a wide area, and are in many instances inaccessible by rail-factors obviously increasing the cost of running and the difficulty of administering them."

Surgery Bad.

"It is a grave indictment of the Canadian Medical Service to say that a fair proportion of the patients in Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospitals should never have been sent there; that inspections by competent medical officers are ludicrously infrequent; that a good deal of the surgery is bad, and that quite 25 per cent of the patients are retained in hospitals for weeks, sometimes for months after they should be sent out."

Waste in Evidence.

"A constant effort seems to have been made to keep these institutions filled, often at the expense of Canadian Convalescent Hospitals, and in at least four instances agreements existed for a considerable time, under which the Canadian authorities agreed to pay upon a 90 per cent capacity whether 90 per cent of the beds were occupied or not."

Dr. Bruce found that "the administration of the Voluntary Aid Detachment group in Shorncliffe area has cost \$113,972.00 a year for a total of 443 Canadian patients, who could have been taken care of by one stationary hospital, because at the present time we have in England the personnel of three stationary hospitals which are unemployed, but are being paid for by us, so that this cost of \$113,972.00 a year is an entire waste."

"Only in very rare cases are operations for varicocele and varicose veins justified by the after result, and on the whole, soldiers would be decidedly better off were these operations never allowed. Even where the operation has been well performed (which is far from being the rule), its success is too frequently visited by a continuance of aching, stiffness, etc."

"In conclusion I may say that evidence of a broad and comprehensive policy, which would ensure that most efficient care and treatment of our men, with due regard to the prevention of waste of public money, has been sought for in vain, and appears to be conspicuous by its absence."